How to / Trackmania / General / Graphic formats

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Introduction

Trackmania deals with 4 different graphic formats, used in different places and on different occasions:
JPEG, TGA, DDS & BIK.

We'll give you an overview what they're good for and how they're created.

Be sure to read all things carefully, they will enable to you gain major control over the graphical outlook of your Trackmania game...

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Section 1: Painting your own things

If you feel the need to create your own graphics for your Trackmania Game, you'll need a good graphics program. There is costly software like Adobe Phoshop™ or Corel Photopaint™, but there are some good free alternatives as well....

PaintDotNet **(Freeware)**
Graphic editing & painting program (includes .dds support).
A great and pretty simple program if you want to get started with creating own graphics.

GIMP **(Freeware)**
Graphic editing & painting program (.dds plugin)
GIMP has lots of options and can be extended easily, therefor it's a bit complex to use.

We've posted links to good tutorial pages in our forum.

In our own tutorials we won't be able to show how to do certain things with every single one of these graphic programs, so we trust in you that, you will find the corresponding options/actions in the program that you use.

For a **quick workflow** when handling graphics, you can install this program:

XnView (Freeware)
Graphic viewing program, quickly converts between formats (includes good .**DDS** support)

Section 2: Format JPEG/JPG

JPG is a **lossy** picture compression format, which can be read/written by every graphic editing or graphic viewing software.

Within Trackmania, it is solely used for displaying **images** within Mediatracker content or on **advertisement signs**.

In this example you can see "artifacts" in the image where the image has been clumped into bigger blocks thus reducing the number of necessary pieces if information to needed display the image. When viewed at its regular resolution the bigger blocks aren't visible our eye has been fooled and the compression is successful.

JPEG compression is also scalable. When saving a JPEG file there is usually an opportunity to set the scale of compression. The more the image is compressed the worse it looks. It is a trade off that is up to you.

Characteristics:
- Scalable compression, very small file sizes possible.
- High compression will cause "artifacts"/blocks to show
- JPG doesn't contain any transparancy/alpha channel information.

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